

Corona del Sol High School named State Champions

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Contact: [Lara Slifko](mailto:Lara.Slifko@azflse.org) (602)340-7235

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For more information, contact:

Lara Slifko 602.340.7235

Lara.slifko@azflse.org

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(Phoenix, AZ) – Competing against Arizona’s top 9 regional teams, Tempe’s Corona del Sol High School captured a first-place ranking in the annual We the People academic competition. The students from Corona del Sol will represent Arizona in Washington, DC at the **We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution** National Finals in April. More than 1200 High School students from all fifty states and the District of Columbia will participate in this highly prestigious academic competition that tests students’ knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

“As coach I was pleased with how the team came together and supported each other throughout the competition. Of course a goal of the class is to win State, but more importantly, as an educator, it is to increase my students understanding and appreciation of our Constitutional Democracy,” said Tim Smith who led his class to the championship.

Students representing Corona del Sol High School are: Eric McKay, Hannah Augee, Ahmed Aboul-Nasr, Vishal Maini, Jocelyn Hu, Derek Huang, Kaitlyn Beaudet, Alex Nunez, Christine Dyster, Shelly Jackson, Zeyang Yu, Jake Yocham, Smitha Ramakrishna, Molly Yang, Rachel Kultala, Elizabeth Lee, Seth Garrison, Katherine Cai, Pankti Shah, Mike Swindle, Wyatt Larkin, Lizzie Shafer, Abby Henderson, Hari Menon, Paul Gu, Siddesh Gopal, Vincent Park, Grace Do, Pooja Rajguru.

In addition to the 9 high schools that competed in the competition, there were also 4 Showcase teams, Desert Sands Middle School (Phoenix), La Cima Middle School (Tucson), Glassford Hill Middle School (Prescott) and Valley Vista High School (Mesa). These students also presented their knowledge and skills of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, some of the younger students answering high school-level questions.

Susan Nusall, Resource Development Manager for the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, has coordinated Arizona’s We the People Program for 9 years. “My passion for the We the People program never wanes because, with athletic championships being the norm, to have students excel and be recognized on an academic level is exciting. They are “experts” now on the Constitution and I know when they leave this class they will be participating citizens who will vote, who will care.”

This year’s 2nd, 3rd and 4th place teams were Dobson High School (Mesa), Hamilton High School (Chandler), and Prescott High School.

The national, state and local competitions are important culminating activities of We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution, the most extensive civic education program of its kind in the country. The *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* textbook, developed by the Center for Civic Education, is distributed in Arizona at no cost to Arizona teachers who attend professional development trainings conducted by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. The Foundation reaches over 300 teachers annually with free We the People training and textbooks.

About Arizona's "We the People" Program

Over the last twenty years, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education has trained several hundred Arizona teachers and distributed thousands of free sets of *We the People* textbooks to Arizona classrooms. As a result, thousands of Arizona students have learned about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights through this innovative, active-learning curriculum.

The Program encourages active learning in and out of the classroom about contemporary constitutional issues, the history of democratic philosophy and the history surrounding the creation of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. *We the People* also meets Arizona Academic Standards in Civics and Government and Language Arts. Each We the People team competing is a regularly-rostered class of juniors or seniors studying civics and government or history.

Ten out of the past eleven years, Arizona teams have placed within the top ten. In 2002, Dobson High School placed first in the "We the People" National Competition. The "We the People" Program is sponsored and administered by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, the Arizona Supreme Court, and the Center for Civic Education.

About the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education

The Foundation provides technical and financial assistance to legal aid organizations, schools and community groups working toward "access to justice for all Arizonans" through law-related education and support of organizations offering legal services to those who could otherwise not gain access to justice.

Helpful Websites:

- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education: <http://www.azflse.org>
- Center for Civic Education: <http://www.civiced.org>
- Arizona We the People Program: <http://www.azflse.org/WeThePeople>

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